

DRIVER'S LICENSE

My wallet wasn't actually stolen. I came out of a store holding a soda in one hand and my wallet in the other. When I got to my car, I had to choose which hand would be assigned the task of finding my keys. Given the choice of my soda or my wallet, I chose to keep the soda and put the wallet on top of my car. I found my keys, got in the car and, yes, drove off with my wallet on the roof of my car. When I got home I was horrified to realize my error. I drove back to the scene of stupidity, but the wallet was nowhere to be found. Later that evening I received a call from a nice fellow who found two of the credit cards near a drain in the street. Arriving at the location, it became obvious to the nice policeman and to me that someone had found the wallet, and decided to discard what wasn't useful by throwing it down the gutter drain. There was my insurance card, library card, and my all-important receipt from the local coffee shop, indicating that I'm a frequent customer and would get a free cup of coffee after two more visits.

My driver's license was not among the remains but the policeman filed my report and gave me some papers with a case number to prove my license was reported as stolen. In the event I had another bout with stupidity and needed to show my driver's license, I would have this case number to present. From there, I made plans to visit the Department of Transportation (DOT).

I entered the facility, took my place in line and soon realized that when I reached the attendant, I would be directed to a second line. In the second line a woman coached her teenage son on how and what to say when it was his turn. When my turn came I confessed to the attendant, "I had a bout with stupidity and need a duplicate driver's license." She was gracious (her middle name might be 'Grace') and said, "We all do that sometime or another." That was nice. She even smiled.

I handed her my current Passport, my non-original-but-legal birth certificate, my Social Security Card, a bill from the electric company, a picture of my house and a note from Roberta the squirrel indicating that I'm kind to rodents and waited for her to evaluate my claim to being who I am and my place of residence. I'm not sure how my good looks and quirky smile played into this but five minutes later I received a duplicate license with the original mug shot that is so bad that it's obvious that it was taken for a driver's license. I'm totally certain that if they needed a picture of a missing person who had amnesia, and the driver's license picture was the only available source of identity, that the person would spend the remainder of his or her life in the dead-letter office and never be matched up with their name and never again have an identity. (This excursion of my imagination is leading to some not-too-bad ideas. It's actually a bit tempting.)

So I now have a duplicate driver's license. The trip to the DOT office, which is located 22 miles from my home, \$30 and my good looks and fine posture, quirky smile (and I might have drooled a bit) are responsible for this shiny new wallet item, which I will put in my shiny new wallet—as soon as I get one.

Somehow, having a Driver's License makes me feel more a part of society. It gives some strange sense of belonging, perhaps akin to being an inmate at a prison, or being listed in the newspaper with others who have committed acts of petty theft or speeding or worse, being elected to some position on the Board of Education or being appointed to some dubious post that is responsible for Christmas decorations and important decisions like, "Who in the neighborhood has the nicest flag display for the July 4th weekend."

During the two weeks I didn't have a license I somehow felt like I was somewhat invisible. It was kinda nice actually. Like part of my identity, which isn't really me, had some time off. It reminded me of the feeling I get when my name is left off the music program—sorry, I haven't mentioned that I'm a musician. Once the realization sets in that my name has been left off, there's a sense of indignation, "They left MY name off the program....No, no, it's not a big deal." (but it is). Then the feeling is immediately followed by relief knowing that if something goes wrong— I am somehow less responsible. "Did you hear that note in the trumpets! Who did THAT?!" "Not me! I wasn't even in the concert. See, look at the program....Nope, I'm not anywhere on it."

Alas, with my new license, I'm back to being a member of society. When someone asks to see my driver's license I don't have to tell them I was stupid and only have a case number from the Police Department in the city where the theft took place. They just pick up my Driver's License, look at the picture and then at me, and realize that it doesn't look at all like me. As they consider the ramifications of accusing me of impersonating myself, they hand it back and say, "Thanks. Have a nice day."

So I'll just pass that along to you: Thanks and have a nice day. May our God who knows us intimately and doesn't need a picture to find us or know we belong to Him, bless you.

Psalm 139

1 O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. (KJV)

HYMN: *Jesus Loves Me* 1860-1862 by lyricist Anna Warner and music composer William Bradbury.